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FAMILY FEST 1981

25,000 PEOPLE FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD CAME TOGETHER IN ROME FOR THE WORLD CONGRESS OF THE "NEW FAMILIES" OF THE FOCOLARE MOVEMENT.

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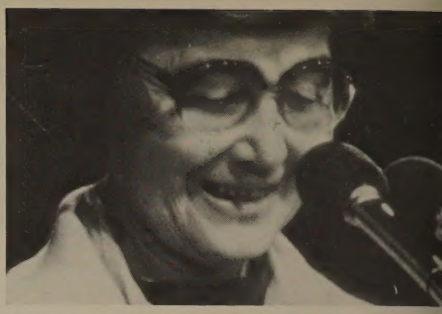
2 *FAMILY FEST 1981: As promised in the previous issue, we are dedicating here nineteen pages in a feature article to cover this extraordinary event which took place on May 3, 1981.*



4 *THE FAMILY AND LOVE: Chia Lubich's message to the Family Fest printed here in its entirety. Her pow ful, inspiring words gave a precise pictu of the principal problems facing the fa ily today, offering at the same time t way to resolve them.*

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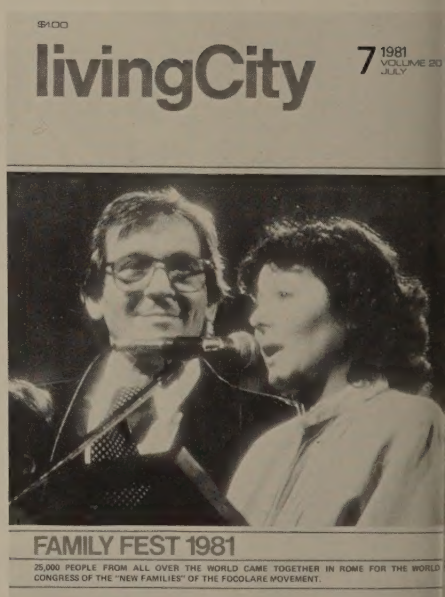
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25,000 PEOPLE FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD CAME TOGETHER IN ROME FOR THE WORLD CONGRESS OF THE "NEW FAMILIES" OF THE FOCOLARE MOVEMENT.

COVER: Paul and Rosanne Terenzani fr Italy tell their experience during the "Fa ily Fest."

OTHER EDITIONS OF THE FOCOLARE MOVEMENT MAGAZINE

CHINESE: "San Sing Seung Yuet Hong" - 70 Wat loo Road 11 B/F - Kowloon - Hong Kong

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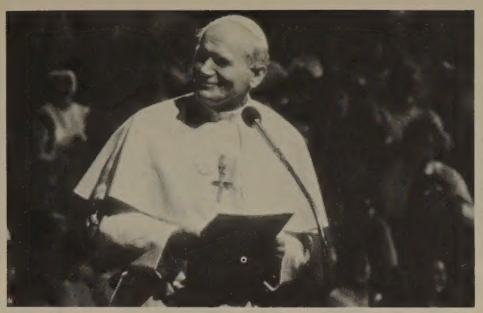
PERSONAL NOTES: A journalist attempts to describe the atmosphere that transpired throughout the entire twelve-hour long gathering. And yet, as he himself admits, certain things escape verbal description.



16 *VOCATION OF MARRIED COUPLES: Pope John Paul II arrived towards evening. After listening to a part of the program, he addressed those present: "Through the work of the Holy Spirit, you have become a unity of two. The power that unites you is love."*

21 *THE EVOLUTION OF HUMAN BEINGS: An interview with the late Piero Pasolini on how the concept of evolution can be fitted into the Christian vision of creation.*

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FAMILY FEST 1981

THE FAMILY AND

Compiled by GUGLIELMO BOSELLI and GINO LUBICH

25 thousand at the Sports Palace of Rome
on May 3
for the World Congress of the "New Families."
Pope John Paul II addressed the gathering.

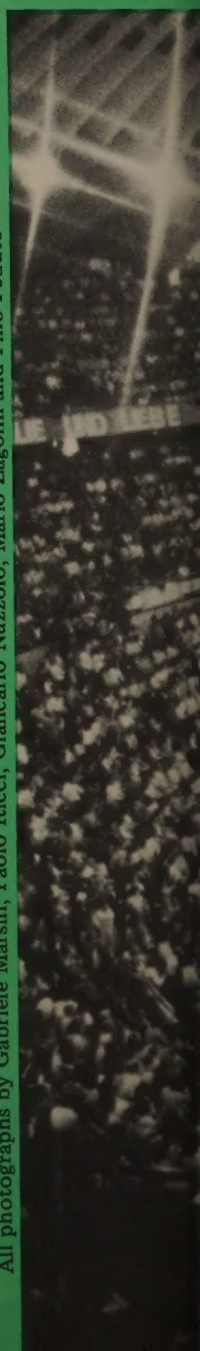
The news of the attempted assassination of Pope John Paul II at St. Peter's Square came as a tremendous shock for everyone. The fact that just a few days earlier we had spent an unforgettable afternoon with him in an atmosphere of deep communion and great joy made our participation in this suffering even greater. That day, May 3, 1981, a multitude of 25 thousand people representing 49 nations from every continent filled to capacity Rome's Sports Palace. They had come to participate in the world congress of "New Families," a branch of the Focolare Movement, to reflect together in depth and to share experiences, on the theme "The Family and Love."

In an atmosphere of spiritual unity almost unthinkable in a crowd of such proportions. the program went on non-stop from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. with talks on the status of the family in our day and the possibilities of renewing it in the light of the Gospel. Experiences were shared in a variety of languages, by married couples of every race and nationality, belonging to different Christian Churches. Also faithful of other religions, who follow the spirituality of the Movement, participated in the sharing. There were songs and dances, theatricals of all kinds to express the air of festivity and the joy of being together.

The day opened with a message by Chiara Lubich, and closed with the words of Pope John Paul II, words resounding with warmth and encouragement.

The event, which had drawn wide interest, was covered by Italy's national press of all political tendencies, by the Italian and Austrian radio and television, by the Vatican Radio which came equipped to broadcast in many languages.

We shall endeavor, in these pages, to convey some of our impressions on the day, and to supply a full transcript of the texts of both messages of the Holy Father and Chiara, together with a photo reportage of the highlights of this event which no doubt marks an important milestone in the development of the New Family Movement.



All photographs by Gabriele Marsili, Paolo Ricci, Giancarlo Nuzzolo, Mario Zagolin and Pino Peduto

LOVE

Chiara Lubich's

My dear friends, sisters and brothers who have come here from every continent of the world for this exceptional meeting, may your hearts overflow with joy.

Today we will be dealing with one of the most controversial topics we face at this moment in history; one of the most vital, disquieting topics of our times: the family.

But what is the family?

Sociologists, moralists, educators, politicians and psychologists could give a wide variety of definitions. I am convinced, however, that all of you are interested, above all, in one idea regarding the the family: God's idea.

What is the family for God?

Today, during this gathering, we shall attempt to give an answer to this question especially. For the moment, let us limit ourselves to making a simple observation.

In the act of creation, he molded a family. When he became man, he became part of a family. When Jesus began his mission, and manifested his glory, he was celebrating the formation of a new family.

This alone would suffice to make us understand what the family is for God.

But what is the family like today?

We all know the answer. The influence of harmful theories, the decline of traditional moral values, theoretical and concrete materialism, and the hedonistic mentality favored by a consumer society have led, and continue to lead, a head-on attack against the family.

Above all, the libertarian and individualistic society has rendered the very idea of the indissolubility of marriage meaningless, and marriage is reduced to a mere "private fact" free of all responsibility and commitment towards society.

We know how certain alarmist propaganda concerning over-population has led to a selfish and materialistic interpretation of the problem of "responsible parenthood" (which is, in itself, an important and serious matter). As a result, affluent societies, at this point, are tending towards a "zero growth rate" or even to a decrease in births as compared to deaths. And to have more than one child, or two at the most, is becoming out of the ordinary.

We are also deeply distressed by the fact that the legislation of many nations tends to foster this decadent tendency with laws that contribute towards weakening the stability of the family. Thus, we have divorce easily obtained, widely granted legal abortion, euthanasia, contraception, male and female sterilization, inadequate economic aid for workers with large families, and so on.

Every day we can see how the communications media, especially television, stage, screen, advertising and the press often present the relationship between a man and a woman as one where the self donation characteristic of love is substituted by a momentary possession of the other, where the physical relationship is reduced to an "erotic game." And the very idea of "sin" in this field has lost all meaning.

Among the young people the idea has penetrated that marriage is something that belongs to the

message

past, and that only a free, common-law relationship between man and woman has sense: A relationship, therefore, which lasts for as long as they feel like it, and is interrupted if their feelings for one another change.

We know how this transitory nature of the life of the couple, causing insecure relationships, leads many to despair after various experiences of this kind. And the suicide rate is very high among the young.

In this context, children find themselves without the natural support of their parents, and they grow up in a climate of uncertain and precarious relationships. This leads to desperation, to a lack of confidence in life, to psychological insecurity, to drugs, and violence.

Furthermore, this mentality leads young people who are still of the idea of forming a stable family, to consider pre-marital relationships as normal practice.

And, in this degenerated situation of the family, the elderly are alienated and no longer find their rightful place.

Lastly, women, who are seeking a new identity with respect to the past, due to their need — in-itself positive — of fulfilling themselves also outside the family, by working, by having a profession, by being active in society, are sometimes led to undervalue their role as wives and mothers.

These are the main problems facing the family of our day. This was also the situation of the family in the world, also in the Christian world, presented to the Bishops of the Synod on the family, last October — a tragic picture which compelled the successors of the Apostles to stress repeatedly in their message the need for family members to frequently turn to the sacrament of penance because of the need for forgiveness.

My dear friends, this is also the picture that presents itself to us today: a truly dramatic picture from a Christian point of view. And we would spontaneously want to ask: who is to blame?

It may be true that the world is what the family has made it, but undoubtedly the opposite holds true as well — the family is a product of the society that has engendered it.

The world of our day is often wallowing in mud, and it is unlikely that the family, which is immersed in this world can emerge healthy. Thus the family is in dire need of the extraordinary help of grace.

Our hearts would certainly desire a different kind of situation and another kind of epoch in which Christian virtues would shine forth, and the family would be honored, praised and imitated.

But God has given us life now, and we must love *our* times, making every effort to render the family and the world what they should be.

Undoubtedly God has brought various Christian movements to life in our times which support the pastoral programs of the bishops for families; and undoubtedly each one of these movements, approved by the Church, has its own charism aimed at healing the family situation from a particular point of view.

And so spontaneously we ask ourselves: where does the New Family Movement want to begin in bringing about this healing? Which remedy does it use and what source does it draw from?

There is no doubt: God who is Love is the remedy and the source, because the family is nothing other than an intertwining of relationships, a repository, a mystery of love: nuptial love, maternal love, filial love, fraternal love, love of a grandmother for her grandchildren the love of the children for their grandfather, for their aunts, for their cousins. . . . Nothing else constitutes a family, binds it together, makes it be, but love. And if the family has failed in the world, it is because love has diminished. Where love dies out, the family disintegrates.

This is why our families must go to the source of Love. Only God who is Love knows what the family is; he is the Architect who planned it as the masterpiece of love, the sign, symbol, prototype of all his other designs.

If he fashioned the family, molding it with his love, he will also be able to make the family sound again through love.

We know that we are being true to our nature as human beings if we behave according to what we are: persons created in the image of God; that is to say, if we remain in communion with God, if we understand our position as the "you" of God.

Similarly, the love that unites a family is truly love if it remains in, nourishes and sustains itself, is measured on, and communicates with the love that is in God, with that love which is the gift of God.

This is why the Church recommends frequent participation in the life of the Sacraments, which bring grace and enrich us with supernatural love. She also invites families to pray together and participate in the liturgy, to nourish themselves on the Word of God, to take advantage of the traditional and contemporary devotions, particularly those associated with the Blessed Virgin which are rich sources of growth in the life of grace.

When this love is enkindled and alive in the hearts of those who make up the family, impossible

problems do not arise, insurmountable obstacles do not present themselves, irremediable failures do not occur. The family returns once again to being beautiful, united and healthy as God intended it to be.

In our day families need a powerful dose of that love. And this is the meaning behind the title of our meeting today: "The family and love."

Our Movement must lead the family, all the families it meets to this decision: to revitalize the love that is innate in every family with that love which is a pure gift of God. In this way, Love will renew love.

If this happens, since "God makes all things work together for the good of those who love him" (Rom. 8:28), the difficulties that today afflict the family in the world, will bear fruit. A new kind of family will be born, ready to meet the needs of our times, the kind of family that the signs of the times foretell.

For the entire twelve-hour-long, "nonstop" meeting, the crowd followed with great interest the various talks, experiences, the musical and folk numbers, and the songs and dances performed by families from different countries. Besides the many journalists present, the event was covered and filmed by movie and TV producers from many countries. The American Broadcasting Company (ABC) was present together with all the Italian national broadcasting companies and some private ones — the Teleradiosole of Rome transmitted live the entire meeting. The Vatican Radio was present as well as other privately owned stations. The Austrian ORF and the ZDF from Germany were also there. A film-making crew, under the direction of Sergio Giordani, worked at preparing a film that will cover the entire event; and Channel 1 of the Italian National television filmed and taped the musical and folk numbers for a new series that will be entitled "Live Concerts."

This love that comes from above will contribute to making the kind of family that is clothed in its own egoism — the kind of family that in our times is contested — more open to the world.

This love will be the best means for re-evaluating the role of women, giving them their true place in society.

This strong love will create an increasing awareness on the part of many men of their responsibility to take a more active part in the life of the family sharing with their wives every aspect of family life on a level of equality.

This love will strengthen all the good that, despite everything, is emerging today in the family: like a greater desire for sincerity and openness, and greater simplicity, easier communication, and fewer complexes in the relationships between boys and girls, who nowadays usually grow up together from early childhood.

"The love of God in everyones heart will lead to a true re-discovery of human corporality. No longer will it be considered maliciously, but rather seen with all its positive aspects as part of human nature.

This love will also accelerate that process already underway which makes us hope that the eroticism promoted by our times will be rejected as such and dimensioned in favor of other interests — such as social, political or cultural.

And only the love that comes from God will be able to offer a true and reliable measure for determining responsible parenthood.

In our modern world, notwithstanding all the negative elements, we are going through a period of searching and deep transformation. It's impossible to think of turning back. Anyone who has true values to propose can influence people in many ways. There are those who offer models of united families with authentic rather than oppressive relationships, families who are open towards the society that surrounds them, who make enlightened choices in favor of life, of children, who heal lacerated relationships between generations, and rediscover the role of the elderly.

So today, my dear friends, we will speak of the family. We will deal with the family as a whole; we will take an in-depth look at the problems concerning the family; parent-child relationships, the situation of orphans, of engaged couples, of widows and widowers, of the elderly; we will speak of adoptions; of the problem of abortion; we will look again at the vocation of our New Family Movement, its spirituality, its service to to the local Church, its relationships with non-Christians and non-believers; we will listen to a wide variety of experiences; we will look at the doctrine of the Church on the family; we will even listen to the words of the Holy Father. What else can we say?

What can we add to such an intense program, so complete in itself?

It seems to me that if we want to give back to the family its true countenance and restore its splendor, then besides the talks, the admonishments, the directives, and the presentation of experiences, great value should be given to the luminous and universal example that eternal Wisdom has invented: the family of Nazareth. All the families who are now, or ever will be, in the world, can look to this family as a model and prototype. Not only the families as such, but each member of every family can be inspired by this family of Nazareth to know what attitudes to assume, what relationships to foster, what virtues to improve.

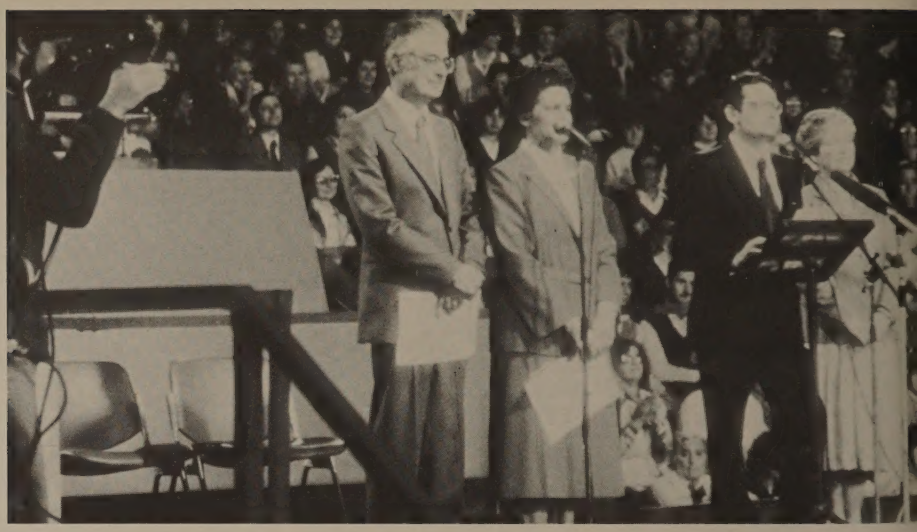
Every man on earth who is a husband and father will always be able to find in Joseph — Mary's husband and the foster father of Jesus — a light, a stimulus, a source of inspiration.

From Joseph he will learn fidelity at all costs, heroic chastity, strength, quiet diligence, respect, veneration, protection for the mother of his children, and a participation in the family cares. ...

And every woman who is a wife and mother will be able to discover in Mary the person she is called to be, her equality to man, her own identity. In Mary, as Joseph's wife, she will see her own desire to share a leading role completely fulfilled. From Mary she will understand how to go beyond the family circle in order to share the rich qualities that are hers to benefit many: her capacity for self-sacrifice, her interior life which makes her confident, her inclination to the religious aspect of life characteristic of women, and her innate need to elevate herself and others onto a higher plane, with her presence, speaking of innocence, beauty and purity.

Analogously, children will find in Jesus, the son of the family of Nazareth, resolved in marvelous unity, the two conflicting tendencies that may disturb them: on the one hand, the need to assert themselves as a generation called to open a new chapter in history and, on the other, the desire to find protection in the security of their family, in love and obedience.

Yes, the Holy Family is the masterpiece of human coexistence — which mirrors the life of the Trinity where love makes God one. May this family stand before us today, together with us, to guide this day for the good of the family in the world and in the Church, and for the glory of God. ○



△

Danilo and Anna Maria Zanzucchi (to the left) and Pino and Mariel Quartana (to the Right), heading the "New Families" World Center participated as "auditors at the Synod of Bishops last fall. Here at the Sports Palace, Danilo Zanzucchi commemorated Igino Giordani, the first married focolarino who played a vital role in the birth and development of the New Family Movement.

Anna Maria Zanzucchi spoke on "Unity and the Cross," while Pi Quartana explained how the "New Families" face difficult situation in family life today. Mariele Quartana clarified at various moments during the program, the different areas where the New Family Movement is working.

△

Maria and Erich Farkas are from Germany. She is Catholic and he belongs to the Evangelical Church. They told how they have found the way to overcome the difficulties that arise because they belong to different Churches, through their mutual commitment to live the Gospel in their daily lives.

Crescenza Lee, ▷ a Catholic woman from Korea, shared how she succeeds in living in harmony and syntony with her husband who has no faith through an exchange of respect and love.

△ *Roseanne and Paul Terenzani from Arezzo, Italy told the story of how they overcame a deep crisis in their married life. Just when it seemed as if their separation was to become permanent, the discreet, unselfish friendship of other families and their son Fredrick's request for love gave them the strength to start again, basing their relationship on an entirely new foundation.*

◁ *Helen and John Githereij, a newly-wed couple from Kenya, related their testimony of Christian faith. Despite tremendous difficulties and resistance, they refused to accept the traditional practice of living together a period of time before getting married that their families wanted to impose on them. They were able, just the same, to avoid a break with their families who, in the end, understood and accepted their decision.*

Sylvester Noche from the Cameroons spoke also for his wife who remained at home with their newborn baby. He relates how they overcame the rigid division and inequality that exists between men and women in their patriarchal society. Through their example they were able to help the many members of their family (including grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, etc.) realize that all should contribute actively to the life of the family community.

Alizia and Norio Kudo. She is a Catholic from Korea and he is Japanese coming from a Buddhist background. Despite the fact that they come from peoples who are historically enemies, they are able to rise above the many difficulties existing because of historical, cultural and religious differences. Out of love for each other, they make every effort to put aside their opinions, habits and traditions that are bound to their respective backgrounds. This helps them to find unity and "to taste the joy of harmony."

△

The Lin's, a married couple, classical ballerinas from Taiwan, expressed the expectation and the joy of meeting in an exquiste dance.

The Roche family from Barcelona. Cesare, the father, is a well-known maestro of classical guitar. Each member of the large family plays a different instrument. ▷

◁ *The international band, Gen Rosso, performed some musical numbers that they had composed for the occasion.*

PERSONAL NOTES FROM THE PRESSBOX

by Gino Lubich

It is easy to relate what happened, but it is the atmosphere that goes beyond description. And everytime we try to translate it into words, we must acknowledge the fact that we are incapable of doing so.

It happened on Sunday, May 3, 1981, when twenty-five thousand people — married couples and families — gathered at the "New Families" world congress in Rome's Sports Palace, just as it has happened at other previous gatherings, big or small, at the Mariapolises or elsewhere, none of which could be described adequately. No matter how keen the observer, no matter how brilliant the writer, no one has been able to convey the atmosphere in which they had been enveloped. For, indeed, there are no words to describe it.

We asked the focolarini themselves, who are the heart and the soul of it all, for a word that might communicate something of what transpired there, of that moving experience, which, despite all our efforts at maintaining a certain professional distance, involved and touched us as well. But they could do no better than say: "Yes, it was beautiful," and nothing more.

They do know, however, the "why" of that atmosphere, and if you will listen to them, they will tell you that this "why" is evident, that it is rooted in a book which was written 2,000 years ago and which is within everyone's reach. A book which contains a secret — that is also within everyone's reach: "Where two or more are united in my name . . ." But caught offguard, like this, not even they are able to suggest suitable nouns, verbs or adjectives which could be put together to express the ineffable sense of that unity.

I have often watched films shot during similar meetings; I scanned photographs, listened to tapes. And even though the images and the voices were faithfully reproduced, I could only detect a trace of what had been experienced by each person individually and by all collectively. Experiences such as these, therefore, have to be lived; they cannot be described.

In this particular climate, in which the human being's highest aspiration, to live one for the other, seems already a reality, the sharing of experiences by individuals, by families, by whole communities becomes a precious exchange of gifts. And all of them, big or small, have the same measure of that unmeasurable value that is charity.

But taken out of context, all those life experiences become poor words, jotted down on a piece of paper. And those who read them at the most may say: "I think the story of those two married people from Switzerland was very impressive," or, "The experience of the African couple was very interesting." Or even, "Well, that little story about those two, it was nice, a little sentimental, perhaps, but quite edifying."

And we realize, with not a little frustration, how inadequate those remarks: "impressive," or "interesting" are; and even the word "edifying" doesn't do them justice. And we would give anything to have had those readers there with us, "living" with us and with all the others that "something" which we could not translate into words. Perhaps they themselves could not have expressed it, just as we couldn't, except for falling back on the most banal way and just say, "It was beautiful!", as I did when I returned home that that evening.

Yet many of the one million people in the world who today are inspired by the ideal of the Focolare Movement have left gatherings like this with a change of heart, and with the decision to start their life all over again. They leave determined to start from scratch, and to go ahead in the new dimen-

Yara and Francis Prado with their adopted daughter, Maria Carlota (to the right), Francis' sister Regina Maria with her adopted son Aroldo (to the left). They are all from Brazil. The two children wanted to express publicly their "declaration of happiness." One of the commitments characteristic of the New Family Movement is to provide a family for children who do not have one.

◁ *During the brief interval at noontime the families gathered in small groups outside on the spacious lawns around the Sports Palace to eat their picnic lunch. This turned out to be another possibility to spend time together in an atmosphere of friendship.*

sion they have experienced in that atmosphere of love, never to lose it again. And we discover that sometimes the same experience, which on paper might appear as an unimpressive, rose-colored little story with an "edifying" ending, when told at one of these gatherings, has the power to touch someone's heart, removing its tough armor and opening it up to the answer to its suffering.

△

Bishop Kazinsiers Majdanski, vice-president of the Committee for the Family of the Vatican Council of the Laity, presided at the concelebration of the Mass. In his homily he outlined a panorama regarding the theological aspects of family problems.

But try to put into writing these mysteries of the soul which are at the same time so real! The page will have a bland, or, worse, a sweetish tinge to it. Life alone can express it, a living testimony only can recreate the breath of that atmosphere.

I had suffered personally, and for a long time, this sense of absolute inadequacy in expressing in writing a reality which I could experience personally day by day, almost touch it with my own hand. Therefore, I was not surprised to see that none of the journalists who covered the "New Families" meeting at Rome's Sports Palace were able to describe either its atmosphere or its deep significance. There were certainly some who grasped it, for the intense involvement could not be concealed, and the concentration in the pressbox was unmistakable. But then, when faced with the typewriter, even those who were most favorable toward the event could not find the right keys to penetrate the gist of it.

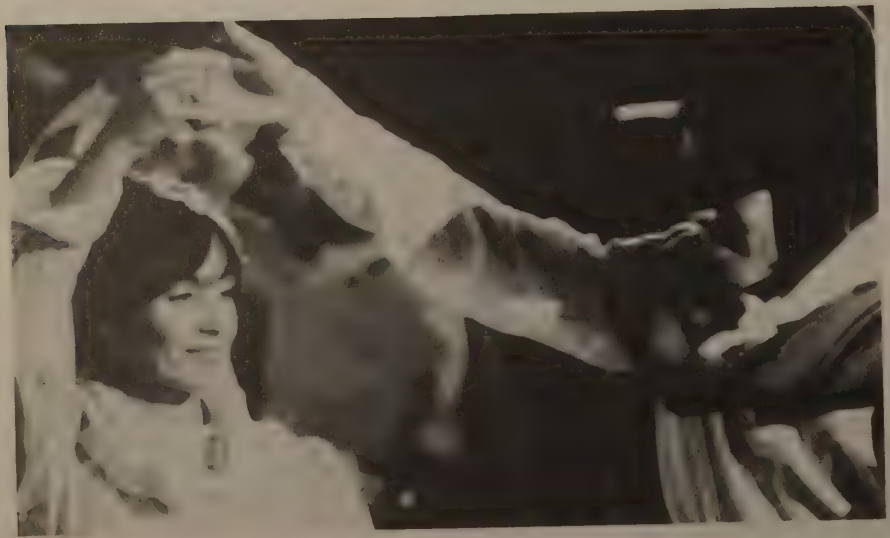
Everybody tried to describe it. Some put emphasis on rather marginal details, like the technical and organizational efficiency, while others made a sincere effort at interpreting that extraordinary atmosphere of unity, fruit of the common commitment to help one another to do the will of God in the family and in society. But by interpreting the exchange of experiences as a series of delightful short stories, or public confessions or exercises in self-knowledge, they revealed that their vision was blurred and their point of view limited.

Nevertheless, many of our news colleagues experienced something they may never have experienced before, nor dreamed of ever experiencing, having been made callous by their profession. And as we walked toward the exit, someone simply burst out: "Beautiful, it was truly beautiful!" And he was certainly not someone who could be suspected of being on our side. Too bad all he could say was "beautiful." Not even his genuine enthusiasm could come to my aid in putting together a line of nouns, verbs and adjectives strong enough to express the unspeakable warmth that springs forth from unity in Love. ○

◁ *The chorus of couples from the five African nations represented at the gathering. The songs were accompanied by a variety of percussion instruments.*

△

"Don't divide your heart here on earth / don't divide your love / because love is one."
A unique singing group made up of families from Venice linked different moments of the day with their lively songs written by Daniele Ricci, who was part of the group.



◁ *One of the couples who performed the "Pericon," the national dance of Argentina.*

◁ *Lillian Mazelewski, from New Jersey, shared her experience during the "Family Fest." "Speaking to 25,000 people was scary, of course," she told us later, "but, at the same time, the reality of unity among all was so strong that it wiped out every fear. It was really a sense of being one, despite the masses of people." Eighty-five people representing various areas of North America — from New York, Texas, Arizona, Nevada, California, Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Massachusetts and Ontario and Quebec in Canada — traveled to Rome to participate in the Family Fest.*

Four gigantic screens, hanging above the stage of the Sports Palace, carried the enlarged image of those who were speaking. Here we see Jos and Chris Bussals, a young couple from Belgium — he is a nurse, and she a housewife. They are living in Algeria with their five children, (the oldest here present), and told how they were able in just a few years, despite difficulties of every kind, to establish relationships of esteem, friendship and brotherhood in a Moslem environment. Before giving his address, Pope John Paul II listened to the last few experiences. ▷

POPE JOHN PAUL II

TO THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE "FAMILY FEST":

vocation of married couples to the interior truth of love

(English text from *L'Osservatore Romano*, May 11, 1981.)

Beloved Brothers and Sisters of the "New Families Movement"!

Veni Creator Spiritus!

I greet you with this invocation, which has a special place in this Paschal season, in which, after the Resurrection of Christ, we prepare for fifty days for the coming of the Holy Spirit, the fullness of the mystery.

This invocation fits all the more into the present year in which, 1600 years after the First Council of Constantinople, we solemnly commemorate the historic event and wish to revive particularly our faith "in the Holy Spirit, who is the Lord and giver of life", as was recalled in the Letter sent to the bishops and to the whole Church last 25 March.

Veni Creator Spiritus!

I greet you married couples with this invocation, which reminds each of you of that great moment in your life when you found yourselves before the altar, to give to each other, in the Holy Spirit, your mutual witness of love, fidelity and matrimonial virtue, swearing to keep them until death: "I take you as my wife — as my husband — and I promise to be faithful to you always, in joy and in sorrow, in health and in sickness, and to love you and honour you all the days of my life".

If the Church invoked the Holy Spirit particularly for this occasion; "Come!", this means that it is really a great moment, "*sacramentum magnum*". In fact, marriage bears within it an analogy to the marriage of Christ with the Church and with the moment in which the Holy Spirit — in the rush of the wind and the glow of the tongues of fire — descended upon the Apostles on the day of Pentecost. Matrimonial consent, that so decisive moment in your lives, brings with it also a certain analogy to the unique episode which took place when the Holy Spirit descended upon the Virgin of Nazareth and "the Word was made flesh" (Jn 1:14).

I refer to these particular moments and I entrust you, dear brothers and sisters, spouses of the "Focolari" Movement, to the Holy Spirit, to that Spirit with whom is connected the origin of Redemption and the origin of your own marriage in Christ and in the Church.

2. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, you have become a unity of two. The power that unites you is love. This human love of yours, which matured in your hearts and decisions, was manifested before the altar, when, to the words of the priest who called upon you to express your generous and definitive consent, you replied with your mutual "I will", and you gave each other the blessed ring, the symbol of your perennial fidelity in love.

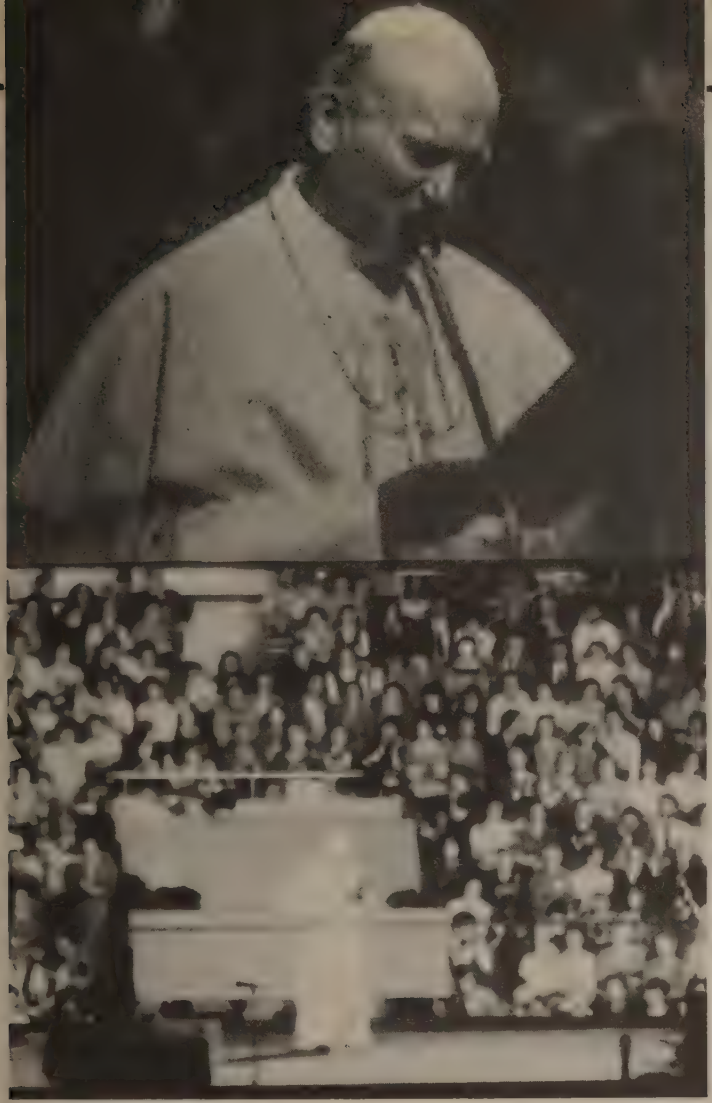
Love is formed in the human person, embraces body and soul, matures in the heart and in the will; to be "human", love must comprise the person in his physical, psychical and spiritual totality.

Simultaneously "God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us" (Rom 5:5).

The reciprocal compenetration of divine love and human love lasts from the day of your marriage. Divine love, in fact, penetrates into human love, giving it a new dimension: it makes it deep, pure and generous; it develops it towards fullness, ennobles it, spiritualizes it, makes it ready even for sacrifices and self-denial, and at the same time enables it to produce peace and joy as its fruit.

By means of this love you constitute unity in God: the *communio personarum*. You constitute the unity of the two gathered in his name and he is in your midst (cf. Mt 18:20).

This unity in Christ spontaneously seeks, in a way, expression in prayer. Love, in fact, is a gift



Pope John Paul II gave the concluding address, which was interrupted frequently by clamorous applause, in an atmosphere of exceptional unity.

and it is a commandment: it is a gift from God, because he first loved us (cf. 1 Jn 4:10) and it is also the fundamental commandment of all moral orientation. As I said in the Homily at the Mass for Families, on 12 October of last year: "To carry out the commandment of love means accomplishing all the duties of the Christian family: fidelity and conjugal virtue, responsible parenthood and education. The 'little Church' — the domestic Church — means the family living in the spirit of the commandment of love; its interior truth, its daily toil, its spiritual beauty and its power". But to live this poem of love and unity in this way you absolutely need to pray. In this sense prayer becomes really essential for love and unity: in fact, prayer strengthens, relieves, purifies, exalts, helps to find light and advice, deepens the respect that spouses in particular must mutually nourish for their hearts, their consciences and their bodies, by means of which they are so close to each other. The Second Vatican Council aptly writes in this connection: "Outstanding courage is required for the constant fulfillment of the duties of this Christian calling: spouses, therefore, will need grace for leading a holy life: they will eagerly practice a love that is firm, generous, and prompt to sacrifice, and will ask for it in their prayers" *(Gaudium et Spes*, n. 49).

My wish for you today is that the Emmaus event may constantly be repeated in your lives: that you may know Christ in the breaking of bread and that you may always find him present in your midst, in your hearts, after this "breaking of bread"!

And I commend you all, every couple, to Christ, who wants to accompany you along your way, just as he accompanied the disciples along the way to Emmaus. I entrust you all to Christ, who knows human hearts!

3 When Jesus first sent the disciples to proclaim the Good News, he sent them "two by two" (cf. Mk 6:7). You too are sent in pairs by that great Sacrament, which, making you husband and wife, makes you at the same time witnesses to the Crucified and Risen Christ.

In the Sacrament, in fact you receive as Christians a new dignity: the dignity of husband and wife, and a new mission, that is, participation in the mission which is that of the whole People of God and which, in various ways, takes its place in the triple mission — *tria munera* — of Christ himself.

You must carry out this mission with your whole life, fulfilling it especially by means of witness. Here again the Second Vatican Council throws light on this matter with concise and persuasive power: "Authentic conjugal love will be held in high esteem, and healthy public opinion will be quick to recognize it, if Christian spouses give outstanding witness to fidelity and harmony in their love, if they are conspicuous in their concern for the education of their children, and if they play their part in a much needed cultural, psychological, and social renewal in matters of marriage and the family" (*Gaudium et Spes*, n. 49).

How fundamental this witness of yours is! How human it must be and at the same time how profoundly Christian! But precisely to carry out this essential task of witness to faith and love, you married couples have a "charism" of your own, described by the Council as follows: "Authentic conjugal love is caught up into divine love and is directed and enriched by the redemptive power of Christ and the salvific action of the Church, with the result that the spouses are effectively led to God and are helped and strengthened in their lofty role as fathers and mothers. Spouses, therefore, are fortified and, as it were, consecrated for the duties and dignity of their state by a special sacrament; fulfilling their conjugal and family role by virtue of this sacrament, spouses are penetrated with

the Spirit of Christ and their whole life is suffused by faith, hope and charity; thus they increasingly further their own perfection and their mutual sanctification, and together they render glory to God" (idem. n. 48).

With your whole life, with your common existence, with your lifestyle, you build up the Church in her smallest and at the same time fundamental dimension: the *"Ecclesiola"!*

Even the little "domestic Church" is, in fact, expressly willed by God and is founded by Christ and on Christ; it has as its essential mission the proclamation of the Gospel, the transmission of the eternal salvation of its members, and it possesses as its interior power the light and grace of the Holy Spirit.

And today, on the occasion of this meeting of ours, as Bishop and Pastor of the Church, I wish to reconfirm your special "place" in the great Community of the People of God. I wish to address to this smaller Church, which you constitute, the expression of a particular love and a special tenderness, which is also manifested in the very term: *"Ecclesiola"*. And I wish to give you again to the Church, understood as the great Divine Mystery, which is carried out in man's history, and in which man realizes himself and fulfills his destiny and his vocation.

So be the "Church"!

Build the Church!

Oh, how much this sacred building depends on you!

May your typical spirituality also help you in this commitment. The "Focolarini" Movement, approved by my predecessors John XXIII, and Paul VI, has expanded in these years and has become structured in various branches and diverse activities: from the "focolari" of community life to married "focolarini"; from the priestly movement to the connection with men and women religious: from the GEN movement to the New Families Movement, to whose beginning and development Igino Giordani contributed, he whom you have opportunely wished to recall barely a year after his death, on this day dedicated to the family. Your initiatives are certainly numerous and your many experiences moving; but your riches lie and must lie in the powerful idea of your spirituality, which is the certainty about God-Love and about his will, the expression of love. In this sense your spirituality is open, positive, optimistic, serene and conquering: you want to build the Church in hearts, with love and in love, living in Christ and with Christ present in the everyday history of every person, especially in the abandoned, disappointed, frightened, suffering, and confused person.

Continue to realize this ideal of yours, in union with the initiatives of the dioceses and other ecclesial movements, in order to help the family institution concretely and effectively in all its spiritual and material needs.

4. In the Sacrament of Marriage you are called to become, as husband and wife, parents: father and mother.

What a vocation and what a dignity! But also how much responsibility!

I would like to use the most penetrating words to express the beauty of this dignity and the greatness of the vocation which is shared by you through the power of the Holy Spirit, when as "one flesh" you manifest your availability as parents and thus make a place in your lives for the new creature. For new human persons!

That "new" being will be your child: flesh of your flesh and bone of your bones (cf. Gen 2:23). You must transmit what is best in your

"Let love resound / because a new lymph now runs among us. . . " The Gen Verde sings with enthusiasm towards the end of the day, which reached its peak when the Holy Father told the participants: "You have conquered also the Pope."

flesh and your soul! To beget means at the same time to educate; and educating signifies begetting. In the human person what is carnal and what is spiritual interpenetrate, and therefore the two great dimensions of parenthood, procreation and education, also interpenetrate.

To educate means a great deal! You yourselves know how many tasks there are in this great, long and patient process through which you simply teach human behaviour to those who are born of you, parents. And since divine sonship has been grafted onto the ground of this humanity, we must teach this person, born of his parents as regards his body and of God as regards his spirit, the fullness of life, that fullness which one has from the Father in the Son, in Christ, through the Holy Spirit.

In this connection it is opportune to read again the words of Vatican II: "True education is directed towards the formation of the human person in view of his final end and the good of that society to which he belongs and in the duties of which he will, as an adult, have a share.

Due weight being given to the advances in psychological, pedagogical and intellectual sciences, children and young people should be helped to develop harmoniously their physical, moral and intellectual qualities. They should be trained to acquire gradually a more perfect sense of responsibility in

In back of the Pope on stage we see from right to left, Bishop Martin, Cardinal Leo Suenens, Cardinal Ugo Poletti and Bishop Majdanski.

The day was over. But the Holy Father asked: "When will you come the next time?" Chiara Lubich answered that for the next two years the world congresses of the Priests' Movement and the New Humanity Movement are planned. Therefore the appointment for the next gathering with the "New Families" is in three years.

the proper development of their own lives by constant effort and in the pursuit of liberty, overcoming obstacles with unwavering courage and perseverance. As they grow older they should receive a positive and prudent education in matters relating to sex. Moreover, they should be so prepared to take their part in the life of society that, having been duly trained in the necessary and useful skills, they may be able to participate actively in the life of society in its various aspects. They should be open to dialogue with others and should willingly devote themselves to the promotion of the common good" (*Gravissimum Educationis*, n. 1; cf. 3).

Oh, how ardently I desire to commend this role of yours as parents, this human parenthood of yours, to the Eternal Father himself! Be united to him with Christ! Through the work of the Holy Spirit, utter the word "Abba" often and recite the "Our Father", in order to learn incessantly from God himself what it means to be a father and a mother; what it means to take the place of the heavenly Father and exercise his authority!

You, who are called to collaborate in the work of the Creator himself — fathers and mothers — I commend you to the Father!

5. The dignity of "parents" casts a fundamental light on what you are for yourselves, reciprocally as spouses; that is, it illuminates your whole love, which is fulfilled through body and soul. You are called, in fact, to a quite special love.

Also on this so important and delicate subject, the Second Vatican Council gives us guidance. "A love like that", we read in *Gaudium et Spes*, "bringing together the human and the divine, leads the partners to a free and mutual giving of self, experienced in tenderness and action, and permeates their whole lives; besides, this love is actually developed and increased by the exercise of it. This is a far cry from mere erotic attraction, which is pursued in selfishness and soon fades away in wretchedness" (n. 49).

And it stresses further that "man's sexuality and the faculty of reproduction wondrously surpass the endowments of lower forms of life: therefore the acts proper to conjugal life, ordered according to authentic human dignity, must be honoured with the greatest reverence. When it is a question of harmonizing conjugal love with the responsible transmission of life, . . . all this is possible only if the virtue of conjugal chastity is seriously practiced." (n. 51).

This love must be learned constantly. It must be learned patiently, on your knees. You must delve little by little into all the profound beauty of the union of the couple. This beauty is of a spiritual nature, not just of sensual nature. And it is at the same time the beauty of conjugal unity, "unity in the body". Yet what is corporeal in man draws its beauty, its light, its truth, when all is said and done, from the Spirit.

In these times of ours, in which the true beauty of conjugal love is threatened in so many ways — threatened together with the dignity of fatherhood and motherhood — have courage! Have inflexible courage to look for it, to bear witness to it to each other. And to the world. Be apostles of the dignity of parenthood. Be apostles of beautiful love. So I commend you, dear brothers and sisters, to the Mother of God — to her whom the Church professed as Theotokos 1550 years ago at the Council of Ephesus, and whom we recall this year too.

I commend you, spouses of the "Focolari" movement — to the Mother of beautiful love! And with great affection I impart the conciliatory Apostolic Blessing to you all and to the members of your families.

A few minutes later, interrupting the thunderous applause that seemed unending, the Holy Father added: "And so, perhaps one more word, but I will be very brief. . . . yes, very brief. . . . I said earlier that my wish is that you be the Church. Now I want to say that my wish is that the Church be you." ●

The evolution of human beings is to become Christ

by PIERO PASOLINI

Many have asked how the concept of evolution can be fitted into the Christian vision of creation. In answer to this question we are publishing an interview given by the late Piero Pasolini to a group of young members of the Gen Movement.

Question. According to scientific writings today, it appears that the evolution of life on earth is a fairly well-established fact. In the past, however, this concept has prompted a great deal of controversy between the teachings of the Church and statements made by scientists. Does this controversy still exist?

Answer. "As a physicist, I am really far from claiming to be an expert on this particular subject. But since it has always been of great interest to me, I have given it some thought and study. I must confess that the perspective it opens on a Christian vision of the world has always fascinated me.

"Yes, there has been controversy. When Darwin first published his book *On the Origin of Species* in 1858, it was the first time that someone had dealt with the problem of evolution in an organically scientific way. It created a sharp conflict with the ecclesiastical authorities, particularly in regard to the origin of the human being. According to the traditional teaching of the Church, man was created directly by God; while, according to the theory of evolution, he was derived, through a process of evolution, from previous, lower forms of living creatures, but as its highest and ultimate expression.

"This controversy, which lasted for approximately a century, was often fed by motives which were not quite relevant to the basic issue. Only in the postwar period, and particularly since the Second Vatican Council, was the problem seemingly resolved, following a deeper study not only of the scientific data, but also of the way of interpreting Holy Scripture. Above all during this time there seemed to be a more intelligent distinction made between the two fields of scientific and of theological research.

"In reference to the latter, I would refer you to a speech Pope John Paul II made before the Pontifical Academy of Science on November 10, 1979, in commemoration of Albert Einstein."

Question. To help us understand the evolutionary vision of the world better, could you summarize it for us?

Answer. "It is well to point out right away that evolution is a process which involves the entire universe. It is generally held, in fact, that matter, by its own nature, tends to become more and more complex, more organized. (I'm not referring to the opposing tendency of matter toward lower energy states, or 'entropy,' which is essentially linked to the tendency toward organizing.)

"This general vision of evolution brings us to the initial creative act of the universe (at least of 'this' universe, which we conceive in terms of our experience limited by time and space). This is the so-called 'Big Bang' — an apocalyptic initial explosion of matter of superconcentrated energy. This primordial event is a hypothesis of all cosmologists today and is based on physical evidence which can be observed today and cannot be explained in any other way.

"This explosion, according to our observations, caused the expansion of a dense nebula of energy and particles of matter at an extreme speed and, initially, at a temperature of billions and billions of degrees. Due to the expansion, which continues even to this day, after hundreds of thousands of years all this matter spread out tremendously and cooled off. Through the natural accumulation of protons, neutrons and electrons the first stable atoms of hydrogen and helium were formed — the *first* manifestation of organized matter.

"After one or two billion years this cloud of matter broke up into smaller formations which began condensing under the action of gravity. At the same time these formations were propelled away from one another because of the continuing expansion, thus giving birth to the proto-galaxies. These, in turn, condensed further. At the highest point of compression, temperature levels of millions of degrees were reached, creating the conditions for the nuclear fission reactions of hydrogen. These were the first stars. Thus, the proto-galaxies began to take on the aspect of today's galaxies: immense clouds of stars and gas.

"With the formation of the stars, there was a *second step* in the evolution of matter, this one based on nuclear forces. From the hydrogen atoms, through nuclear fusion, there developed increasingly complicated aggregations of

protons and neutrons — that is, the nuclei of all ninety-two chemical elements known to us. The explosions of billions of huge stars scattered particles of these elements into space in such a way that the stars which were formed later incorporated them into their own supplies of hydrogen causing a condensation into even smaller and colder masses — the planets.

"The *third phase* of the organization of matter took place in space and above all on the planets. It is the chemical phase, based on electromagnetic forces. With the considerably lower temperatures, the atoms of these elements have been able to mass together in endless combinations of all kinds, giving birth to all existing chemical and mineral composites from water to countless types of rocks. This third phase was a big jump in quality; the chemical organization is much more complicated and more varied than the nuclear one had been.

"On some planets, where the conditions were favorable, the chemical organization proceeded with ever more complex structures of atoms and molecules of so-called 'organic composites,' which became the starting points for the development of life, or the *fourth phase*, called the cybernetic phase.

Question. When did this happen?

Answer. "On earth these conditions seemed to have existed over three billion years ago. A form of primordial life left traces in the characteristic coal residues found in age-old deposits. Two billion years ago, life was already blooming at the microscopic stage as sediments of mono-cellular (single cell) algae have revealed to us. Then came the division between the vegetable and the animal forms of life. True organisms with a central nervous system have been found in fossil traces in specimens from 600-650 million years ago. About 500 to 400 million years ago fish and amphibious creatures appeared followed by reptiles of all sizes who dominated the scene for 300 million years.

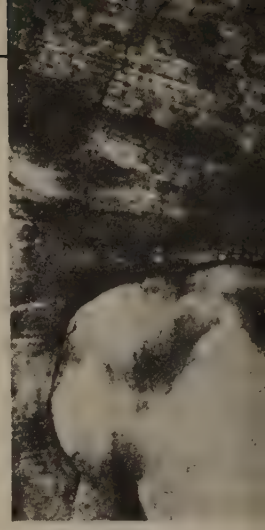
"About 150 million years ago a line of evolution developed gradually which exploded seventy million years ago after the 'fall' of the reptiles: it was the line of the mammals. These spread all over the earth and dominate it up to this day. This is particularly true since the advent of the last of the mammals — the weakest and most defenseless, yet mentally the most 'gifted' — the human being, who subdued every other living being.

"This general picture of evolution is not a figment of someone's imagination. It is the result of a logical reconstruction resulting from determining the order of the enormously rich fossil material found by excavating the various strata of the earth's sediments. The living creatures emerge in successive order according to their order of development and lead us to the conclusion of an evolutionary process."

Question. But how did this evolution come about? What were the laws and mechanisms that caused it?

Answer. "Darwin proposed a theory according to which the chance genetic mutations that inevitably occur and natural selection lead to a progressive evolutionary development. With a few variations this theory is, in substance, still accepted by many scientists. It reflects, in part, processes that can be verified in reality. It does not succeed in giving an adequate explanation of the basic mechanism which leads from the blue algae of two billion years ago to the human organism. We are still in the dark, I repeat, not about the 'fact' of evolution, but about the mechanism of how it took place.

"And now we come to the crucial point of the question: the origin of the human being. According to the data of palentology (the science that deals with living organisms of the distant past), it seems the first signs of a human line of evolution can be traced back to creatures of about forty million years ago. A number of evolutionary strains branched in different directions leading to the formation



A detail of Michelangelo's painting in the Sistine Chapel: the creation of man.

of numerous types of higher creatures (namely higher forms of mammals, like apes and man). Most of these died out through the ages, the only ones left being apes and man. The 'human' trace (having characteristics which differ from those of apes) is already found in beings of fifteen to twenty million years ago. Recent findings have shown that hominids of three million years ago are already very close to human in form, more so than hominids of more recent origin. It appears that evolution took several, independent roads at the same time.

"With the sino-pithecanthropus of 400 thousand years ago, and with the Neanderthal man (from 200 to 400 thousand years ago), we move considerably closer to the human form of today. *Homo sapiens* seems to have matured in the course of mutations of these latest hominids. However, it is still possible that we are derived from a different line of evolution, as some traces of 200 to 300 thousand years ago seem to indicate. The fact is that even the most developed hominids disappeared 400 thousand years ago and only remains of *Homo sapiens*, the human person as we know him today, are found after that time.

"In presenting a picture of the evolution of creatures tending towards the human form fifteen to twenty million years ago to the present, we find a progressive maturing towards today's person. Therefore, in scientific terms, we are led to believe that we are genetically closely linked to the forms of the past."

Question. If things are as you say, is it possible to find an agreement between the Biblical vision of our creation and the process described by science?

Answer. "As I said before, the origin of the human species was the crucial point of contrast between the evolutionist and the religious vision. We are familiar with the Biblical narration of how the world was created. In six chapters, the authors of sacred scripture describe the beginnings of the world, the origin of life and of man and woman.

"On careful scrutiny, it is a masterwork of simplicity, precision and common sense. Let us remember that it was addressed to a primitive and post-neolithic people to explain truths of the highest order: God, a transcendental Being who was the initiator and creator of all things; who created light and the heavens; who divided the earth into oceans and continents; who infused the first life-generating forces into the waters and on the earth's surface; who made an inferior reality human by blowing his own breath into its inner self, making it a creature similar to Himself . . .

"Apart from some inexact data regarding the order in which creation events took place, there is nothing we can directly fault in the Biblical account in the scientific position of our day. Furthermore, in those distant, ancient times there could be no exact account of the origin of things and God's creative acts. Still there is no comparison of the Biblical account of creation with the creation mythologies of other peoples, so full of fantasies and fabulous images.

"Without trying to force the intentions (which certainly could not have been scientific) of those who wrote the Bible, the story may indeed point to an evolutionary rather than a static vision of creation (namely, that God created, one by one, every species as it is today). Concerning man, the author of the Biblical account seems to have been the first to explain the transcendental nature of the human intellect: man thinks because, in some way, he has God as the origin of his mind. Later, Greek, Christian, Jewish and Arab philosophers up to the time of the early Renaissance, reasoned that in order to explain the reality of human thought — mainly judgement of truth, knowledge of the absolute, and self-knowledge — it was necessary that a certain form of God's presence be inserted in the thinking process of human beings. In light of this, it appears obvious that if the idea of the 'absolute' and of God is present in the mind of men and women, we must draw the conclusion that God is the absolute foundation of our knowing system. And this is exactly what the Bible says: it tells us, in fact, that while the rest of living creatures have been formed in accordance with the principle of matter (which is also of divine origin), human beings became such when God 'blew' Himself into this 'knowing mechanism,' this 'something' which was perfectly ready to receive it."

Question. Is there anything in science which might indicate a similar way of looking at mankind?

Answer. "Science, due to the very limitations of its field of research cannot, of course, 'find' God in our brain circuits; yet it must admit a certain degree of transcendence in the way human knowledge is achieved. In this regard, I would like to refer to a demonstration, an extremely abstract theorem of logic, namely the well-known Goedel Theorem of 1931. This shows, in a most general and abstract manner, that it is not possible to deduce from a 'finite' limited system of concepts, axioms or postulates of generically structurable elements, an acceptable criterion that could define the truth of statements arrived at by mere logic. To do this, one would need an unlimited number of elements. This theorem, which provoked much controversy in the beginning, is today considered one of the highest points of philosophic speculation.

"Should we wish to draw our conclusions from this, (as the cyberneticians like to do), we could note that the structure of the human brain is composed of a limited number of 'operating' elements and can, by necessity, elaborate upon only a limited amount of initial data. But how then has this finite reality been able to demonstrate the very theorem which claims the necessity of an infinite process to reach truth? This fact would obviously lead us to presuppose the presence in our minds of an absolute point of reference, a certain 'knowledge' of the absolute which would, by its own nature, elevate any mental process to a plane of infinite dimensions. And since the 'non-absolute' is unable

to reach the 'absolute,' we must assume the reverse; namely, that the 'absolute' enters into the 'non-absolute.' To explain how this might come about is, in my opinion, not within the realm of science. But, coming back to the Biblical vision, God is in some way present in the thinking mechanism of man. He forms the principle, the beginning, of human thought, the same principle which allows me to think about myself while I am making this statement; which makes me grasp the truth when I say, 'This is a piece of paper.' The statement 'is' has its roots in the absolute.

"Obviously, this reasoning does not belong in the sphere of scientific research. It follows a metaphysical line. Yet, we can deduce that there is actually no real contradiction between the scientific and the religious vision of human beings. On the contrary, to a scientist who is a believer and who wishes to unify his vision of the world, the two visions are interdependent: The religious vision completes the scientific one by inserting itself in it. Without this, the scientific vision remains incomplete, without any prospect of solution."

Question. Does science open some perspective into the future of mankind?

Answer. "Concerning the future, I feel the two visions of the world have even a greater need of being integrated into each other. If we consider the entire history of evolution on earth up to the advent of human beings, we see that they appear as the true 'sense' of the process from which they have emerged. What about the future? Is there anything which, of itself, gives meaning to human beings? The evolutionary vision, seen from the scientific aspect only, can shed no light on the future. But, without a sense of the future, there can be no sense either of the past or the present. And it is here that the mystery of the future, unsolved by science can be illuminated by a Christian vision: there is the 'Christ event.'

"This was to be expected. If human beings are what they are because of contact with God, a divine sense of their future was already established at the moment of their first appearance on earth.

"In this vision, the emergence of Christ in human history defines the future in terms of the absolute. Our true nature, its perfect realization was defined by Christ, the Man, whom the Christian vision presents as a particular man, but also as 'Man' at the same time — the total synthesis of humanity as a whole.

"In the Christian vision, therefore, human evolution finds the human-divine reality of Christ as its absolute end. It is above all with Christ that we truly emerge at a level of consciousness and of tension, with a divine sense of our own destiny. Evolution, after the advent of Christ, rises from the individual to the social plane. The individual who wants to fulfill him- or herself as a person must be part of a network of relationships which aim at the divine, in carrying out Christ's fundamental message: 'Love one another as I have loved you.' In other words, God-Love is the essential relationship among people. Any other kind of relationship must find meaning in it. It is in this divine network that Christianity sees human society fulfill its own true nature — the nature of Christ. We could say that our evolution today moves toward our ideal of becoming Christ.

"Furthermore, in this way we become part of a synthesis on an infinitely vaster scale, which is likewise derived from a Christian vision of the universe. I am speaking of the cosmic reality of Christ, in whom, as St. Paul tells us, all things were made and all things live at every level of existence. Here things are still 'moaning' as they await their hour to become 'new' and to become part of a total reality in which God shall be everything in everyone." ●

The uncovering of fossil bones of enormous reptiles from 150 million years ago in the Sahara Desert. The paleontological findings reveal the appearance on the face of the earth of living beings that became gradually more complex and organized.

WORD OF LIFE

**"Whoever finds his life
will lose it,
and
whoever loses his life
for my sake, will find it."**

(Mt. 10:39)

The word makes us live.

The word makes us free.

The word guarantees happiness.

The word converts.

The word purifies us.

The word draws us to our specific vocations.

The word brings forth the hatred of the world and the sanctity of the disciple.

The word makes us see the truth.

The word brings comfort.

The word gives us joy.

The word produces works.

The word gives wisdom.

The word preserves us from human concerns.

The word obtains everything.

The word brings about union with God.

The word gives us hope of eternal life.

The word makes us one.

The word changes one's mentality.

The word makes each soul a heaven.

"Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake, will find it" (Mt. 10:39).

With this new word of life, Jesus reminds us that there are two sorts of life we can experience: the ordinary life, which we build for ourselves on this earth, and the supernatural life given to us by God through Jesus — the life that will not end with death, and that no one can take away from us.

Therefore, you can approach life with either of two attitudes: on the one hand, you can be totally concerned with this earthly existence, as if it were your only worthwhile possession. In that case you will end up thinking only of yourself, your own interests, and your own family: ultimately, you will live wrapped up in your own world affirming only yourself. In the end, however, you will inevitably meet death. On the other hand, you can live differently, with the awareness that God has given you a life that is much more authentic and profound. Then you will have the courage to live in a way that is worthy of this gift — even to the point of being ready to sacrifice your earthly existence for that better life.

"Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake, will find it."

When Jesus said these words he was thinking of martyrdom. You, like every Christian, must be ready to lose your life in order to follow our Lord and to remain faithful to the Gospel, even if this should mean undergoing a violent death, and you will obtain true life. Jesus was the first to lose his life in this way, and he received it back glorified. And he has forewarned us, "Do not be afraid of those who can kill the body, but cannot kill the soul" (Mt. 10:28).

Today he is telling you:

"Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake, will find it."

If you read the Gospels carefully, you will see that Jesus repeats this concept on six different occasions, thus showing how important it is and how essential he considers it.

However, Jesus does not intend this exhortation to lose one's life only as an invitation to martyrdom. It is a fundamental law of Christian life.

We must be ready to give up the idea that our lives should revolve around ourselves, and to renounce our selfish independence. True Christians — and therefore you, too, if you want to be considered as such — must put Christ at the center of their lives. And you know that what Christ wants from you is love for others. If you make his program of life your own, you will certainly lose yourself and find true life.

Someone might think that not living for oneself involves adopting an attitude of passivity and renunciation. But this is certainly not so. I heard it put this way: "Living as a Christian is not a matter of scorning life or being uninterested in it, but rather of committing one's life to the way of love." A real Christian always lives a committed life and is fully aware of his or her responsibility. What distinguishes the Christian is the focus, the goal, of this commitment.

WORD OF LIFE

"Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake, will find it."

Right here on earth you can already experience that when you give of yourself, when you love, there is more life in you. When your day has been spent at the service of others, when your daily work — perhaps monotonous and tiring — has been transformed into an act of love, you will experience the joy that comes from being more fulfilled as a human being.

"Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake, will find it."

By following Jesus' commands, all of which are based on love, you will find eternal life, after this brief earthly existence is over.

Do you remember how Jesus will judge us on the last day?

He will say to those at his right hand (and my wish for you is that you will be on that side): "Come you who are blessed by my Father . . . for I was hungry and you gave me food . . . I was a stranger and you welcomed me; I was naked and you clothed me" (Mt. 25:34-36).

In order to allow you to share in the life that never ends, he will look only at how you loved your neighbor, and he will consider what you have done for others as done to him.

How, then, can you live this new word of life? How can you start right now to lose your life in order to find it?

By preparing yourself for that great, decisive final exam for which you were born.

Look around you and fill your day with acts of love. Christ is waiting for you in your children, your spouse, your colleagues at work, your teammates, your friends. . . . Do good to everyone. And don't forget those you read about every day in the newspapers, or hear about through friends or on television. Do something for everyone, insofar as you are able. And when you feel that you have nothing left to give others, you can still pray for them, whether they be living or dead. This is also a true and worthwhile expression of love.

Chiara Lubich

SUCCESS AT ANY COST

by ARDEN

God has always had his hand on my head. When I was born I was a still-birth. After trying, unsuccessfully, to bring me around the doctor laid me aside as dead. The next-door neighbor who had assisted the doctor decided to try to revive me — what could she lose I was dead anyway. She was successful. I guess God had his plans for me.

I did not have an ordinary child's life. In fact, I sometimes wonder if I had a childhood. By the time I was ten my parents were divorced. My mother had to go to work, to keep the little family together, so I became the little mother at home. We lived in abject poverty.

I did not like to be poor. I developed a consciousness of unworthiness in my personality. I continually dreamt of a better life. In fact, I dreamt of a "Shangri-La."

Poor children find some way of entertaining themselves, and mine was reading. I found that I could read in the library without any cost, so I spent many, many hours there. My mother couldn't afford the kind of education I wanted. Books were at my disposal, so I would get my education that way. I knew I must have an education if I wanted to complete my dream. And this dream was never to be poor again. I felt the rich had everything!

The years passed. I married. I was busy with the children but my dream still persisted. Someday I would have that better life.

After the children grew up I got a job I liked. I learned everything I could about it and started my own business.

Seeing other people in business, I felt that you could not have friends in business. So I plunged myself into work, and as far as people were concerned, I would use them to further my cause. My favorite saying was, "God helps those that help themselves." I was going to be a success at any cost. I felt if a person were not a success, it was his own fault, because he or she hadn't tried.

Before I had the business, my marriage was not going so well, so now that I had the business, I plunged myself into it and used it as a haven to escape from home. If I came home before my husband was asleep, there was quarrelling. I began to feel that I had no home. As long as I had work at the studio it was bearable, but many times there wasn't enough work in the evening to keep me busy. Sometimes I would walk in the downtown section trying to find some distraction for my tortured mind. I truly felt I was alone in the world. Of course, I consoled myself that the higher you went in any endeavor the more alone your life would be because you left the people who could understand your level of life. On each higher level, there were fewer people of your kind. I pictured the most successful person on earth as completely alone, because there was no one in his class. He had something that no one else had, but he had to pay a price, of course, of loneliness. Everything had a price. You got nothing for nothing. A successful person had no need of people. If they couldn't communicate with him on his level they were to be discarded. These were some of the things I learned through the success books I devoured whenever I could. I always felt one must pay for success — and I was willing to do it. If you weren't willing to pay, then, you didn't deserve it.

Somehow, the price was pretty steep for what you got — for example, tense nerves, which tie up the whole system. If you lived this way for a prolonged period of time your body began to break down. I saw many business men collapse

over their desks and were wheeled out to the ambulance. Many never came back.

In my case I was also nervous, short tempered, and had a disgust for people who were slow thinkers. Slowly and insidiously I was sinking into a mire which was enveloping my life. I was suffocating. I was not free. I was not happy. I had to make more money, more quickly, so that I could afford a life of ease and freedom.

In the meantime this bucket of worms was eating away my very life. I was fearful that the sand of time would pour out before I could reach my goal. I had to work harder, watch competition, not trust anyone — they were all out to put me out of business if I was not vigilant.

I also had a need for competent employees. The work was exacting and people have long stopped being craftsmen. Everyone wanted a job where they could file their nails while they got paid — with coffee breaks yet. I was desperate. I advertised, again, in the newspaper.

One girl came. I interviewed her but I didn't think she had what I needed. "I'll hire her," I told myself, "and when other applicants, who are more efficient, come I'll get rid of her."

She came from Brazil, had a heavy accent, and had some difficulty with the language. I needed a sharp girl who had a command of the English language, who could spell, type fairly fast, knew her punctuation, knew composition, layout and paste-up. She was exactly the opposite. She had a desperate need for a job and had a beautiful defense when asked if she knew how to do anything. She always answered, "You will see."

Somehow she managed from day to day. In the meantime no one else showed up for the job. She had a sweet disposition. I attributed that to the fact that the Latin people were warm hearted. She worked hard, and I didn't have to get after her to keep busy. This girl was different — what was it? Are there some people in the world who aren't out to get everything they can for the mighty dollar? She began to grow on me, in spite of the fact that I felt the way I did.

She had friends who came in at noon. They all went to lunch together. She would get back on time and get to work. She always seemed to have extra lunch at her table and she munched while she worked. After she was with me about a week she asked for a favor. "OK, what was the favor?" She needed more time for lunch — she wanted to add her rest period to her lunch time. Suspicion gripped me — here it starts — first this, then what next? I didn't like changes! Nevertheless, I allowed it. Her friends joined her in thanking me.

What was so important that would cause this much joy? I had to know why she needed this extra time. I inquired and she told me that she used her lunch time to go to Mass and could barely get her lunch from the restaurant in time to bring it to her table, to munch on later.

"My life took on a new meaning. The God I thought I believed in — who was somewhere in a far-off land — became a personal God."

Slowly I was taken by this tiny bit of humanity and her beautiful friends. I plied her with questions. She was not anxious to answer, but I was persistent. I wanted to know more about her. On the application she put Brazil as her birthplace. So I questioned her about her family and about Brazil. Her family was in politics in Brazil. She said she had just arrived in Chicago from New York. Before that she had been in school in Italy. I wondered why she would want to work here, in Chicago, if her people were so prominent in Brazil. Looking at her I surmised she could be no more than eighteen or nineteen years of age, but she seemed to have traveled a lot and was educated abroad. So again, I plied her with questions. She said she had a rich father. I didn't reckon with "her idea" of a rich father. So I was satisfied with the idea of a rich man's daughter wanting to travel and have her own experiences — why not?

When her friends came there was such joy and the same interest bubbled among them. From wisps of conversation I caught things that interested me. I am insatiably curious, so back to the questions. Why would such different girls have a common interest. One was Italian, one Brazilian and the other American, yet they had a common bond. They said, that they belonged to a movement, and they wanted to start a Christian revolution. I was looking for a revolution, even though I didn't know it.

Deep down I was looking for a better life. I really was fair game.

Before long I was going to Mass along with them. We constantly talked about Jesus. I could hardly believe that so much beauty existed within the reach of anyone who wanted it. Slowly suspicion turned to trust. I wanted to be with them all the time. When I was alone I would be in danger of falling back into my old ways.

No matter what mistakes I would make, through charity, I was not exposed to ridicule. I was loved despite all my faults. Their love burned away the imperfections. Little by little I began to love too. I learned to accept myself along with all the other people. It was an amazement to me that I could love everyone. When I began to see with the eyes of love, there were nothing but beautiful people who were misled by their "love-starved" thoughts.

Revolution is a mild word to express what took place in my soul! My life took on a new meaning. The God I thought I believed in — who was somewhere in a far-off land — became a personal God. I found myself conversing with a living God. I found myself so full of love that at times I don't think my feet touched the ground as I walked. I was alive. I was free. God made the world and gave me dominion over it — the whole world was mine. What else did I need? God was good. He loved me and I loved Him. Now I live in love. And I also have a "Rich Father." ●

MARIAPOLIS 1981

The 1981 Mariapolis will be an extraordinary opportunity to learn, to grow and to share and, above all, to experience charity which is the life of the Christian community. You, your family and friends are cordially invited to come to the Mariapolis and to share in this unique grace.

About the Mariapolis

The Mariapolis is the summer meeting of the Focolare, held every year for those interested in the Movement and for those who wish to come into contact with it. For one week persons of all ages and walks of life are exposed to the spirituality of unity. Above all, they strive to practice it by creating among themselves a rapport that molds them into a community, a family. It is intended to be a basic experience of such intense unity that the participants will be able to bring it back into their own environments. And this is the most striking fruit of these conventions. They tend to be models of a world which lives according to the Gospel. Last year about 80,000 people participated in eighty Mariapolises around the world.

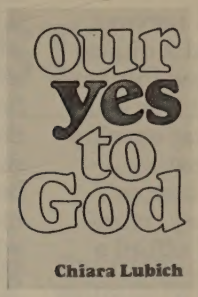
If you hurry, there is still time to register for one of the North American Mariapolises to be held this summer in various places all over the country. Contact the nearest Focolare Center for detailed information (see addresses next page) or see *Living City*, Vol. 20, nos. 5 and 6.

NORTHWEST
Western Washington University
Bellingham, Washington
July 12, after supper — **July 18**, after breakfast

MIDWEST
University of Wisconsin
Whitewater, Wisconsin
July 19, after supper — **July 25**, after breakfast

EAST COAST
Alfred University
Alfred, New York
August 2, after supper — **August 8**, after breakfast

new! new! new!



THE TALKS OF THE 1981 MARIAPOLIS

"A celebration without end" is how Vincent de Paul describes the lives of those who say "yes" to God by doing his will.

In this book Chiara Lubich explores the many facets of doing God's will, which is one of the central points in the life of the Focolare Movement she founded. Her central thesis is: God is love, and there can be no better way of loving him in return than by doing what he asks of us.

First she puts this fundamental intuition to the test of Scripture. She then moves on to the experiences of some of the great saints, and draws upon the teachings of the Church Fathers, the Second Vatican Council, and the recent popes.

This book is stimulating and practical. It shows that doing God's will involves much more than mere passivity or resignation. Moreover, throughout the book, Chiara Lubich points out that doing God's will is the way to true freedom and to our total fulfillment as human beings.

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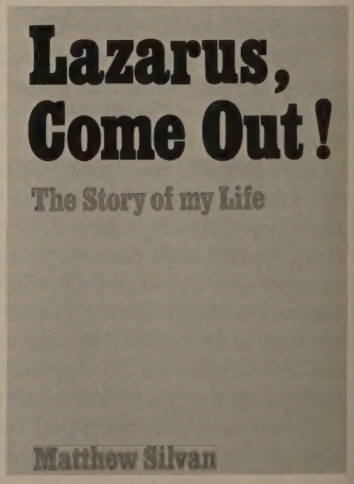

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What is the Focolare Movement?

THE BEGINNINGS

The Focolare Movement began in 1943, in Italy. Chiara Lubich, with a small group of girls, realized in the midst of the total destruction of World War II, that God is the only one worth living for. Hence they began to place the Gospel in the center of their lives. The testament of Jesus became their Ideal: "That all may be one . . . that the world may know that you have sent me, and that you have loved them as you have loved me . . . " (Jn.17: 23). The life lived by these first girls, the spiritual way they spontaneously followed, gave rise to a form of spirituality proper to the Focolare Movement. It represents a powerful means of introducing the Gospel into modern life.

WHO ARE THE FOCOLARINI

The name "Focolarini" takes its origin from the Italian word "fire" and suggests the idea of "carriers of fire."

Single men and women live in separate communities called Focolare Centers. Their principal aim is to achieve unity among themselves through mutual charity practiced twenty-four hours a day. They follow the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience. They work as other lay men and women in regular jobs and professions.

Some married persons, even though continuing to live in their families, participate fully in the life of either the men's or women's Focolare Centers in their common effort to achieve this same unity. They are called "Married Focolarini."

THE VOLUNTEERS

The Volunteers, who are also called the "Volunteers of God," would like to transform all human realities according to the Gospel spirit. For this reason they remain in their jobs and in their professions in order to vivify them with this spirit.

Their aim is to help form a society made of men and women who are made "new" by the Gospel message and who can then bring new life to all fields of human activity (education, business, etc.). This results in new social relationships which, in turn, lead to the realization of new structures of society.

THE LARGEST MEMBERSHIP

The largest membership of the Movement is made up of men, women, and young people of all social conditions who are free of any formal ties with it. Their bond of unity stems from their free and willing acceptance of its spirit. They keep in touch with the Movement and with one another through large or small gatherings, publications, correspondence, and personal contact.

People with other commitments, even those bound to religious institutions, can form part of the Movement too because the Movement exists wherever its spirit is lived. People of non-Christian religions are also counted among the Movement's friends. Also those who owe no allegiance to any faith are often attracted by one or another of the Movement's aspects.

GEN

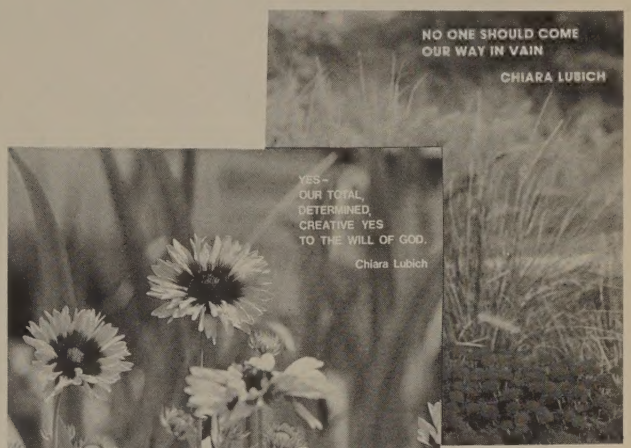
The new generations of the Focolare Movement form another Movement or, better, three movements: the Gen 2, the Gen 3 and the Gen 4 Movements, divided according to their various age groups "Gen" stands for new generation.

Thousands of young people all over the world have been attracted by the spirituality of unity. Their number continues to grow.

At the core of this large group of youth, are Gen who have committed themselves to living the Gospel message of love. The Gen use all possible means to share with other youth the conviction they have that the Gospel is the answer to every question and the motive for everything they do.

Focolare posters

A variety of posters, both color and black and white, are available at all the Focolare Centers. The latest two are in color (15"x18"). All of the posters can be ordered by mail from:
Focolare Movement, P.O. Box 496, New York, NY 10021.



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If ordered by mail please add handling and shipping charges and specify if you wish to receive them first or third class.

Shipping and handling charges:

FIRST CLASS — **Delivery time: approximately 1 week**

1 poster 1.40, 2 posters 1.55, 3 posters 1.70, 4 posters 1.80. For more than 4 posters, postal rates depend on weight and zone.

THIRD CLASS — **Delivery time: approximately 2 weeks**

1 to 2 posters 1.00, 3 to 4 posters 1.15, 5 to 6 posters 1.30, 7 posters 1.40. For more than 7 posters, postal rates depend on weight and zone.

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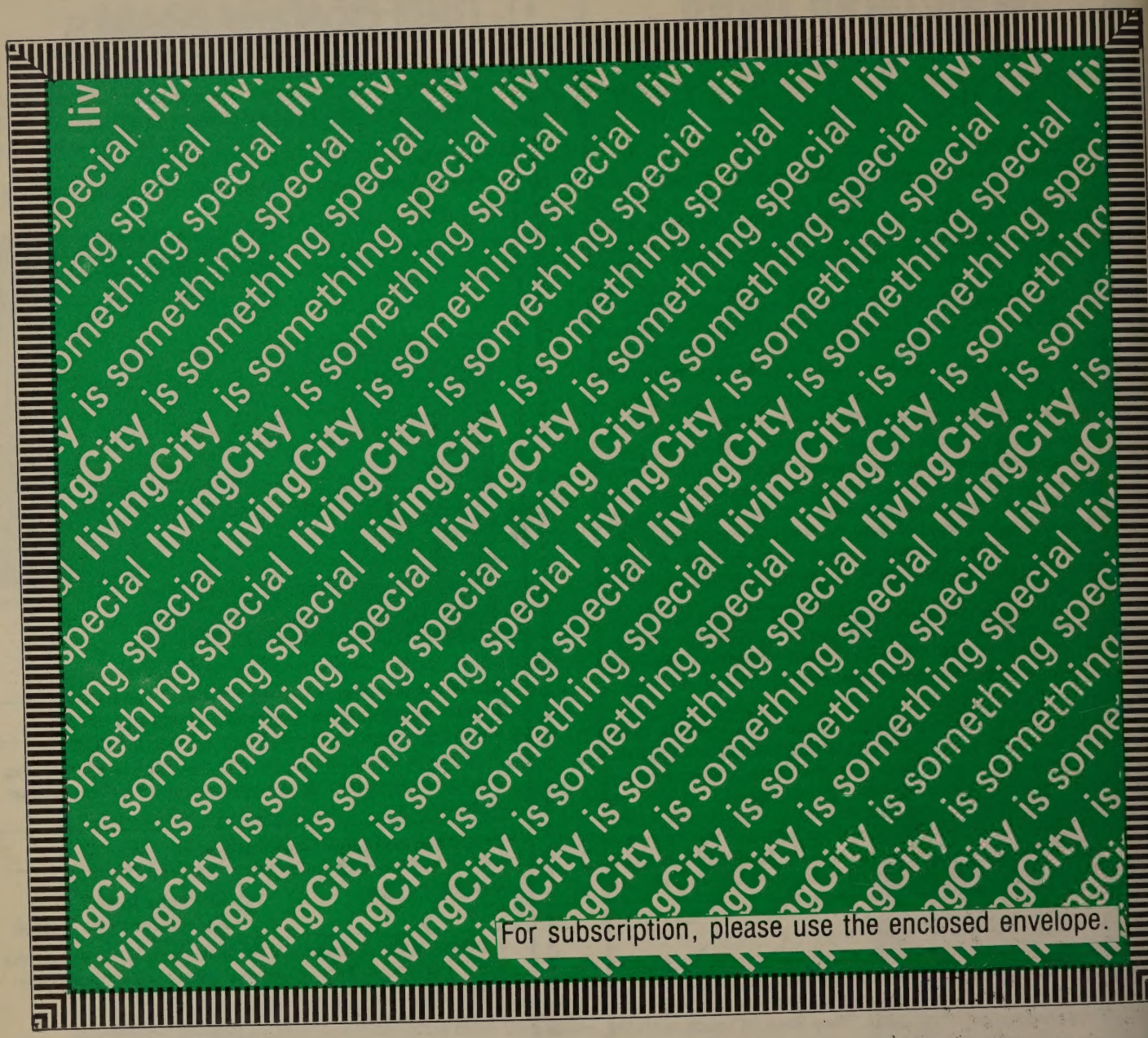

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